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Message Text

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ORIGIN OES-07

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EUR/NE - MR. DJEREJIAN
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ACDA - MS. GALLINI
T/D - MR. SCHEINMAN
----------092336Z 007312 /15
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 133489

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: TECH, ENRG, BE

SUBJECT: BELGIAN VIEWS ON U.S. NUCLEAR POLICY

REF: (A) BRUSSELS 4705 (B) BRUSSELS 4683 (C) STATE
122509

1. EMBASSY MAY DRAW ON FOLLOWING TALKING POINTS FOR ORAL COMMENTS ON BELGIAN NOTE VERBALE (REF B).

2. WE APPRECIATE THE FRANK AND THOUGHTFUL COMMENTS ON PRESIDENT CARTER'S NUCLEAR POLICY STATEMENT WHICH WERE PROVIDED IN THE NOTE VERBALE. WE ARE AWARE THAT BELGIUM AND THE U.S. SHARE THE OBJECTIVE OF PREVENTING FURTHER NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION AND THAT BOTH COUNTRIES STRONGLY
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SUPPORT THE NPT AND THE IAEA SAFEGUARDS SYSTEM. WE ALSO APPRECIATE BELGIUM'S CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IN THE LONDON SUPPLIER GROUP AND WELCOME THE REAFFIRMATION OF ITS INTENTION TO AVOID EXPORTS OUTSIDE THE EC OF SENSITIVE TECHNOLOGY PERMITTING THE PRODUCTION OF MATERIALS USABLE IN EXPLOSIVE DEVICES.

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3. THE PRESIDENT RECOGNIZED IN HIS STATEMENT THAT THE U.S. IS MORE HAPPILY SITUATED IN TERMS OF ENERGY RESOURCES THAN MANY OTHER COUNTRIES WHICH UNDERSTANDABLY LOOK TO

NUCLEAR POWER TO MEET A LARGER PORTION OF THEIR ENERGY NEEDS. WE ARE ALSO VERY MUCH AWARE OF THE CONCERNS OF BELGIUM AND OTHER COUNTRIES ABOUT AN ASSURED SUPPLY OF BOTH NATURAL AND ENRICHED URANIUM. WE HAVE ANNOUNCED THAT WE WILL BE SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASING OUR ENRICHMENT CAPACITY BY CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW CENTRIFUGE PLANT. WE ALSO BELIEVE IT IS ESSENTIAL TO INVESTIGATE MORE ACTIVELY WORLD URANIUM RESOURCES WHICH MAY PROVE TO BE SIGNIFICANTLY GREATER THAN PREVIOUS ESTIMATES HAVE SUGGESTED.

4. AS THE PRESIDENT STATED, WE ARE DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT PREMATURE ENTRY INTO A PLUTONIUM ECONOMY WHICH WOULD MAKE WEAPONS-GRADE MATERIAL EVER MORE WIDELY AVAILABLE AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE PROLIFERATION WE ALL WISH TO AVOID. THE EXTENT OF OUR CONCERN IS DEMONSTRATED BY THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION TO DEFER INDEFINITELY COMMERCIAL REPROCESSING IN THE U.S. AND TO RESTRUCTURE OUR BREEDER PROGRAM. WE OURSELVES BELIEVE THAT THERE ARE SUBSTANTIAL GROUNDS FOR QUESTIONING THE LONG-HELD ASSUMPTION THAT RECYCLING PLUTONIUM IN LIGHT WATER REACTORS IS ECONOMICALLY ADVANTAGEOUS AND, AT MOST, SUCH ADVANTAGE WOULD BE MINOR. IN OUR VIEW, THERE ARE OTHER POTENTIAL WAYS OF STRETCHING URANIUM RESOURCES.

5. IN ANY EVENT, WE BELIEVE THAT THERE IS STILL TIME TO
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EXPLORE WHETHER WE ARE ABLE TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY TO SERVE OUR BROADER SOCIAL PURPOSES, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME DERIVING THE BENEFITS OF ITS ENERGY POTENTIAL. RECOGNIZING THAT ALL COUNTRIES DO NOT SHARE OUR PERCEPTIONS, THE PRESIDENT HAS PROPOSED AN INTERNATIONAL FUEL CYCLE EVALUATION. WE WELCOME BELGIAM PARTICIPATION IN THE EVALUATION. A REVISED APPROACH PAPER WAS HANDED TO THE FOREIGN MINISTRY ON (DATE PROVIDED BY EMBASSY) (REF C).

6. THE U.S. RECOGNIZES THAT, AS A NUCLEAR WEAPONS STATE, WE HAVE A SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY UNDER ARTICLE IV OF THE NPT TO SHARE WITH OTHERS THE PEACEFUL BENEFITS OF NUCLEAR ENERGY. BUT IN DOING SO, WE MUST CERTAINLY NOT IMPERIL THE OBJECTIVES OF ARTICLES I AND II, WHICH WE BELIEVE COULD BE JEOPARDIZED BY THE SPREAD OF SENSITIVE TECHNOLOGIES UNDER NATIONAL CONTROL. WHEN, FOR SUCH REASONS, WE DECIDE TO DENY OURSELVES COMMERCIALIZATION OF REPROCESSING, IT HARDLY SEEMS REQUIRED THAT WE EXPORT IT.

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ON THE OTHER HAND, WE BELIEVE THAT OUR PROPOSAL OF A FUEL CYCLE EVALUATION IS DESIGNED TO ENHANCE THE TYPE OF PEACEFUL NUCLEAR COOPERATION WHICH IS ENVISAGED IN ARTICLE IV. VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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